

George Lardner, newsroom
The Washington Post
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Dear George,

When I wrote you earlier this early morning it was so I could mail it when I left for my early morning walking. That is when I got the paper and read your story on the new executive order on secrecy. The more things change the more they remain the same!

That requirement of a concise reason for classification and identification of the classifier is not new at all. Those "concise" reasons have always been conclusory and to my knowledge false but the requester is hardly in a position to prove it. If this is a change in form, it is not in substance. I'm sure JLI can give you countless examples if you want it.

With Steven Garfinkel^{kel} heading the Oversight office that experience~~fox~~ is again guarding chicken houses.

When he was USA general counsel he was in charge of my suits against the Archives and handled one himself. Even^{handled} the Top Secret classifications applied by the Commission - which did not even have authority to classify anything. In the end I got all the executive session transcripts. There is not a single classifiable page in any and all were initially withheld. They even had Top Secret on the testimony they were to publish until the Printing Office said they could not set type on anything Top Secret.

In every instance the classification was to prevent embarrassment, several times to our first unelected President.

In one suit they withheld the 5/19/64 executive session transcript, claiming the need to protect Herman Redlich's privacy. It has since been released and it was Ford, not Redlich they were protecting. ^{and} He was the running dog for the far-right racists who wanted Redlich fired. I got about 300 pages of the ugliest, nastiest stuff about him, no claim to protect privacy. Only the slightest representation of that, already public, in the transcript. There was no privacy to protect other than Ford's.

When the Archives refused to take a couple of clear pictures of unbloody parts of JFK's clothing, no end of color pictures full of blood already disclosed by the Archives, and I believe that Garfinkel handled that one himself, + invoked the relevant Archives regulation in force, that in lieu of personal examination of the ^{clothing} documents it would take and give us photos. The only possibility for almost all Americans in places like Alaska or Hawaii. But they did not want the evidence I was seeking out so they re-wrote the regulations and Garfinkel personally lied to Gesell in invoking the replacement regulation, giving Gesell a copy, and said saying it was the applicable one at the time I applied.

In General, I've finally gotten a great volume of formerly "national security" documents. Can't remember one that ever qualified for classification. Best, *[signature]*